



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Press Release

January 15, 2004
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ACCUSED COLOMBIAN CARTEL LEADER ARRAIGNED TODAY ARREST THE RESULT OF ICE'S EL DORADO TASK FORCE INVESTIGATION



NEW YORK – **Michael J. Garcia**, Assistant Secretary of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), praised the arraignment of alleged leader of Colombian Norte Valle Cartel **Archangel De Jesus Henao-MONTOYA**, a.k.a., “El Mocho,” by U.S. Attorney Roslynn R. Mauskopf, for the Eastern District of New York today.

“A leader of one of the world’s most violent criminal enterprises will meet justice, which is more than he ever offered to his alleged victims,” said Assistant Secretary Garcia. “ICE is committed to protecting the homeland against criminals who aim to destroy American lives with drugs and to destabilize our economy through money-laundering and exploitation of our financial systems,” he said.

The arraignment comes following MONTOYA’s expulsion from Panama and transport by ICE and DEA agents yesterday to the United States, and his subsequent arrest by ICE Agents upon arrival.

The Norte Valle drug cartel is suspected of trafficking 30-50-percent of the cocaine that leaves Colombia for the United States and Europe.

Montoya was charged in a July 2003, superseding indictment in the Eastern District of New York with drug trafficking, money laundering, and conspiracy violations. According to the indictment, the Cartel is responsible for laundering hundreds of millions of dollars in drug proceeds.

The indictment also alleges that Henao-Montoya and the North Valle cartel employed members of Colombia’s right-wing paramilitary organization, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), to protect its drug routes and drug laboratories. The AUC has been designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. government.

MONTOYA is facing prosecution as a result of an investigation by the ICE led and IRS assisted El Dorado Task Force, comprised of Federal, state and local law enforcement. It is the largest anti-money laundering task force in the United States and since it’s 1992 inception is responsible for more than 1700 high level money-laundering arrests and the seizure of more than \$560 million.

In January 10, 2004, Panamanian authorities working with ICE and DEA agents arrested Henao-Montoya in Panama pursuant to a provisional arrest warrant issued by the Eastern District of New York.

ICE